MARCH 16--Meet Ronald Lance Kramer. The 40-year-old muscleman (and convicted felon) is the government informant who helped trigger the steroid investigation now engulfing scores of professional athletes, including baseball stars Barry Bonds, Jason Giambi, and Gary Sheffield. When state and federal investigators last year raided the offices of Balco, the San Francisco firm at the center of the steroid probe, [agents reports of players] detailed an investigation that was aided by a snitch for the San Mateo County Narcotics Task Force (NTF) who provided information about Balco's illegal steroid pipeline. That same source would also be quoted in a [subsequent affidavit] describing Bonds's personal trainer, Greg Anderson, as a well-known steroid dealer whose "clients include professional baseball players." Deemed a "reliable informant" by agents, the snitch had "been providing information to the NTF on other individuals associated with steroids in an attempt to earn a reduced sentence in his criminal case," according to the original search warrant affidavit. That informant was Kramer, who has since relocated from California to Arizona, where he runs a nutritional supplement business. In September 1997, Kramer was named in a [16-count criminal complaint] charging him with the sale and distribution of an assortment of anabolic steroids. He eventually pleaded to a pair of felonies and was sentenced to six months in jail and placed on three years probation. In February 2000, Kramer was arrested again on steroid charges. In a bid to avoid prison, he "agreed to work with NTF in its efforts to infiltrate the local body-building community in regards to the manufacture, sale and/or use of anabolic steroids, growth hormones and other illegal substances," according to a [subsequent court filing] by a San Mateo prosecutor. In a bid to have Kramer's probation terminated, the felon's lawyer once claimed that his client "has worked his little [fingers to the bone] as an informant and general source of information for the Narcotics Task Force on steroid related offenses." (11 pages)

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